James Burgoyne, Jack Rehm, Michael Coe, & John Thacker

Philosophes of the 17th and 18th Centuries – Presentation Overview

PowerPoint Presentation –

Descartes

* A very mathematical thinker who believed in self evident truths
* 4 precepts of knowledge
  + Accept nothing as true that is not recognizably so
  + Divide and conquer
  + Deduce implications from truths
  + Keep records in logical order
* Intuition, methodical doubt, “Cogito Ergo Sum,” Mind over Matter, Believed in God
* Maxims for the practical world
  + Moderation, Stick to your guns
  + Nothing is within our power but our thoughts
  + Choose work best suited to you

Spinoza

* Believed people should study scripture
* Cognitive emotion
* Early existentialist ideas
* 3 knowledge types
  + Abstract
  + Common
  + Intuition
* Pragmatic view of good and evil
* Single authority, religious toleration, “Peace and Security of Life”

Denis Diderot

* Materialistic view of the universe
* Suggested that all human behavior was determined by heredity
  + Not a believer in the idea of progress
* Close friend of Rousseau
* Best known for serving as co-founder, chief editor of, and contributor to the Encyclopedie

Adam Smith

* Father of modern economics and capitalism
* *The Wealth of Nations* and *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*
* The Invisible Hand
  + Self interest: individuals are motivated to act only for their own self interest
* Pursuing self interest can also promote the common good

David Hume

* Scottish thinker who wrote *A Treatise of Human Nature*
* Empiricism, Induction, Skepticism
* Hobbesian, Price-specie flow, private property

Cesare Beccaria

* Lived in the mid to late 18th Century 1738-1794
* Italian intellectual
* Did much thinking on crimes and punishments
  + Against the death penalty
  + Against torture
  + Rationalism in law enforcement

Voltaire

* Men are born evil
* Deist
* Believed in one singular authority
* Civil Rights & Freedom of Religion

Montesquieu

* Separation of powers
* All events are driven by a principal movement
* Democracy
* Divided the power of the monarchy

Rousseau

* Morality
* Society corrupts the man
* Man has changed over time
* “Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains. Those who think themselves the masters of others are indeed greater slaves than they.”

Brief Debate on how to rebuild the government and restructure the society of Lisbon after the 1755 earthquake